

Idaho LGBTQ Oral History Project

Nicole “Nikki” Leonard



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

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This Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) Oral History Project began as a key component of a cross-listed Boise State University course, Intro to LGBTQ Studies (GEN 380, HIS 381, SOC 497). Dr. Riley Caldwell-O'Keefe taught the course and designed the project as an interactive learning tool to help students understand LGBTQ history, with special emphasis on Idaho history, and the impacts of this history on local individuals. In addition to this history and context, students learned interviewing techniques throughout the semester. We discussed ethical considerations and obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the project. Throughout the process, we worked with Boise State Special Collections and Archives librarians, Alan Virta and Cheryl Oestreicher. The culmination and digital release of the collection would have been impossible without them. We are thrilled and honored to offer these first-person insights which help provide a more well-rounded and comprehensive story of Idaho history.

Name: Nicole "Nikki" Leonard

Biography: Nicole "Nikki" Leonard was born in Anchorage, Alaska in 1955. From a young age, she identified as female, but tried to live as a male. After a marriage that led in divorce, Leonard began the transition process. This interview talks about the challenges of living as a woman at home and a man at work, and ultimately the experience of transitioning in the workplace. While currently not involved in the LGBT community, Leonard has worked for Your Friends, Family, and Neighbors (YFFN), was on the board of directors of The Community Center, and wrote articles for the *Diversity* newsletter. Also worked to add "gender identity" clause added to Boise's Antidiscrimination policy. Leonard is concerned that suicide is the leading cause of death within the transgender community.

Keywords: male to female transition, spirituality, federal government, Transgender Day of Remembrance, suicide, Pride, Your Friends, Family and Neighbors (YFFN)

Interview date: 2011

Interviewer: Justin Baxter

Interview duration: 1:02:57

City: Boise

Timed Notation:

0:00:00	Introduction (name and nickname)
0:00:24	Birthplace
0:00:32	Locations lived
0:02:05	Identity
0:03:00	Growing up
0:08:28	Religious background
0:15:00	Coming out
0:30:40	Coming out and transitioning at work

0:36:40	Community work and activism
0:38:32	Organizing Boise Pride
0:43:00	Amending the City of Boise's Anti-discrimination Policy by adding Sexual Orientation AND Gender Identity
0:47:12	Future of Boise activism
0:49:15	Struggles of coming out at work
0:49:58	Community
0:52:10	Locations around Boise that feel most secure for transgender community
0:56:25	Knowledge of other government workers transition in Idaho
0:59:00	Least and most comfortable establishments in Boise
1:01:00	Next step